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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2183
RUEHPF/AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH PRIORITY 0704
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA PRIORITY 6609
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY 9001
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE PRIORITY 0282
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 7214
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 000666

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [CB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: JAPAN AND CAMBODIA HOLD MINISTERIAL DEFENSE TALKS
FOR FIRST TIME

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: During a first-ever meeting between the Japanese and Cambodian Ministers of Defense, Japanese Minister Ishiba told Cambodian Minister Tea Banh on March 5 that Japan will provide disaster relief support to Cambodia and allow Cambodian students to study at Japan's defense academy. The two also discussed a range of bilateral and regional issues, including the DPRK's missile programs and Cambodia's "shared concerns" about China. Contrary to press reports, Ishiba did not discuss concrete plans for Japan to provide further PKO support to Cambodia. End Summary.

2. (C) During a first-ever meeting between the Ministers of Defense of Japan and Cambodia, Japanese Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba told his Cambodian counterpart Tea Banh March 5 that Japan will provide disaster relief support to Cambodia, MOFA First Southeast Asia Division officer Shogo Yoshitake told Embassy Tokyo on March 10. Minister Ishiba also announced that Japan will host Cambodian students at its defense academy, but did not elaborate further on the specific type of assistance Japan might provide. In contrast to press reporting, Ishiba did not discuss concrete plans to provide future PKO support to Cambodia.

3. (C) MOD contacts confirmed that Ishiba did not discuss PKO assistance for Cambodia. According to MOD International Policy Division Principal Deputy Director Mitsuko Hayashi, Ishiba's meeting with Tea Banh covered a range of bilateral and regional issues, including Japan's concerns about China's military buildup and the DPRK's missile programs. Tea Banh expressed appreciation for the 1993 Japanese peacekeeping activities in Cambodia, as well as Tokyo's financial contributions to Cambodia's reconstruction efforts. Tea Banh said that Cambodia shares Japan's concerns on China. He added, however, that Cambodia's engagement with China in terms of trade and security is considerable. He cited as an example the recent purchase of a patrol vessel from China to be used for combating piracy in Cambodia's waters. On DPRK issues, Tea Banh expressed hope that Cambodia's role in ASEAN and its efforts to advance an ARF Defense Ministerial could play a positive role in persuading North Korea to engage with the international community.

4. (C) Comment: Information stove-piping continues to be a problem between MOFA and MOD. In response to Embassy Tokyo's

request for information on Ishiba's meeting with Tea, MOFA called over to MOD to obtain a readout of the meeting, and passed that information to Embassy Tokyo. MOFA contacts noted however that MOFA "doesn't really know what MOD is planning on this," illustrating that information sharing within Japanese government agencies continues to be a problem.

SCHIEFFER